

## OVERVIEW

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) have established a voluntary National Standard of Excellence for employer-provided commuter benefits. EPA and DOT are working with a variety of national, state, regional, and local organizations and agencies to challenge U.S. employers to voluntarily meet the National Standard of Excellence and make it worthwhile for them to join the initiative. By meeting the National Standard of Excellence, participants in the initiative help to:

- ◆ Cut air pollution and global warming pollution
- ◆ Reduce traffic congestion
- ◆ Increase employee job satisfaction
- ◆ Improve employee recruiting and retention
- ◆ Reduce parking space demand and expenses
- ◆ Cut taxes for both employers and employees

If half of all U.S. employees were offered these commuter benefits, air pollution and traffic would be cut by the equivalent of taking 15 million cars off the road every year.

## HOW CAN AN EMPLOYER MEET THE National Standard of Excellence?

Employers can meet the National Standard of Excellence in a variety of ways. Participating employers agree to offer employees at qualifying work sites with at least one of the following:

- ◆ Tax-free transit passes
- ◆ Tax-free vanpool benefits
- ◆ Telecommuting
- ◆ Parking cash out (employees can trade free parking for their cash equivalent)

Participating employers agree to provide three additional commuter benefits from a long menu of options; some of the most popular include:

- ◆ Shuttles to and from transit stations (provided directly or through a service)
- ◆ Ridesharing or carpool matching
- ◆ Preferred or reduced-cost parking for carpools and vanpools
- ◆ Compressed work schedules
- ◆ Facilities, such as lockers and showers, or financial assistance for biking or walking to work
- ◆ On-site amenities (e.g., convenience store)
- ◆ Employee commuting awards programs

Employers meeting the National Standard of Excellence provide employees with a contact for commuter benefits, a central place (e.g., a Web site) to get information about commuter benefits and services, and periodic updates on their commuter benefits. To remain in good standing in the initiative, employers must ensure that a minimum percent of employees are using the benefits.

## WHY SHOULD AN Employer Join This Initiative?

**Improve employee recruiting and retention.** Commuter benefits can make an employer more attractive to potential employees and help retain existing employees.

**Increase employee job satisfaction.** Employees arrive at work on time, relaxed, and ready to work. They also are less likely to lose work time due to traffic accidents.

**Save money.** Employers can save money in many ways, depending on their circumstances: reduced parking expenses, reduced facility costs, and reduced income and payroll taxes. Employees also enjoy financial savings on parking, commuting, and taxes.

**Reduce traffic, air pollution, and energy demand.** Employers meeting the National Standard of Excellence are making a substantial contribution to reducing traffic, energy demands, and air pollution.

## WHAT DO EPA and DOT Provide?

**Public recognition and employee recruiting.** EPA and DOT provide credible, third-party public recognition to employers who meet the National Standard of Excellence, helping these employers gain recognition for being commuter-friendly and environmentally responsible.

**AMA training course.** The American Management Association (AMA) in cooperation with EPA, DOT, and the Association for Commuter Transportation is developing a training course to help employee benefit managers implement commuter benefits.

**Technical briefs and assistance.** EPA, DOT, and their partners provide briefs that answer questions about implementing and managing commuter benefits. EPA and DOT also provide technical assistance to help employers meet the National Standard of Excellence.

**Web tools.** EPA has developed a Web-based tool that will enable an employer to assess the overall financial, environmental, and traffic impacts of its commuter benefits.

**Exchange ideas.** EPA and DOT will convene forums for exchanging ideas among employers who meet the National Standard of Excellence for employer-provided commuter benefits.

## WHO IS Participating?

Hundreds of U.S. companies have joined the initiative, including Nike Inc., Yahoo! Inc., Chevron, Eddie Bauer, and many others. For a complete list of Commuter Choice Employers, please visit [www.commuterchoice.gov](http://www.commuterchoice.gov).

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